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## BRIEFER ARTICLES.

**Anemonella thalictroides** Spach, Hist. Nat. Veg. vii. 239.—We adopt this genus and Spach's name for it. The little plant has given much trouble, having the leaves of a *Thalictrum*, except that the cauline are whorled-involucrate, the only point in which it really accords with *Anemone*, while the terminal depressed-sessile stigma is foreign to both these genera. Spach is the first to characterize the genus, though even he did not rightly describe the stigmas; and his name is excellent. Much earlier than this, F. Hofmeister, in the Regensburg Flora, gives the names *Syndesmon thalictroides* and *Syndesmon tuberosum* as imposed by Count Hofmannsegg, but no character is indicated, and the two plants are not of the same genus. The latter species is one of a group of Asiatic and European species of *Thalictrum* (‡ COROLLINA of Boissier), which, indeed, have large and petaloid sepals and short erect stamens, but all have the unilateral stigma of *Thalictrum*. This is as true of *T. orientale* Boiss., as of the rest, which this author well describes as with "*stigmatе oblongo recto*," but Lecoyer incorrectly as with "*stigmatе minutissimo*," probably from the fruit. We await the concluding part of Lecoyer's monograph of *Thalictrum*, which should give some needed explanations. The first part is in Bull. Soc. Roy. Bot. Belg. xxiv, 1885. On page 223 it describes *T. anemonoides* as with "*stigmatе minutissimo punctiformi*," which applies only to the remains of this organ upon the fruit; but the next page comes nearer to the mark with "*stigmatе ordinairement sessile, disciforme, disposé presque horizontalement au sommet de l'ovaire*." Then it is large and broad.

We may note that the specimen which M. Lecoyer describes at the close of his account of the above species, "*dont les caractères distinctifs ne concordant pas*," no doubt belongs to *Isopyrum biternatum*.—A. GRAY.

**Edmond Boissier**.—M. de Candolle has just published a biographical sketch of this distinguished botanist, who died the 25th of last September, at his country residence in Switzerland. Dr. Gray has also given a brief outline of his life and work in the *Am. Journal of Science* for January. Both of these gentlemen knew Boissier personally, and none could be more competent to speak of him. He was born in Geneva the 10th of May, 1810, of a family from whom he inherited an independent fortune. Instead of devoting his life to luxurious idleness, he determined to enter upon some profession, and being in Geneva, with the De Candolles, it was but natural that his choice should fall upon botany. His attention was directed entirely to systematic work, chiefly in the region of the Mediterranean and the East. In 1837 he collected in Spain, and between 1839 and 1845 he published his *Voyage Botanique dans le midi de l'Espagne*, two quarto volumes, containing 180 plates. In 1842 he traveled with his wife in Greece, Syria and Egypt. In 1849, while traveling in Spain, he lost his wife from typhoid fever, and the rest of his life was spent in the shadow of this sorrow and afflicted by his own bodily ailments. Between 1842 and 1855 appeared his *Diagnoses Plantarum Orientalium Novarum*. In 1845 was completed his monograph of *Plumbaginaceae*, while in 1862 appeared his great monograph of the genus *Euphorbia*, published in De Candolle's *Prodro-*

mus. In 1866 he published his *Icones Euphorbiarum*, containing 120 folio plates. His great work was the *Flora Orientalis* (1867 to 1884), in five octavo volumes, embracing a region extending from Greece and Turkey to the first cataracts in Egypt, and eastward to the borders of India. The work was entirely completed, and at the time of his death he was preparing a supplementary volume containing recent discoveries.

He was a great traveler, visiting Europe from Norway to Spain and the Crimea, and also much of the East. His last trip was to Spain in 1881, his eighth visit, his first botanical trip having been to the same region more than forty years before. And so the older botanists, the pioneers, are gradually departing, but their names will always be familiar to us as we endeavor to build a superstructure worthy of the foundation they have laid so well.—J. M. C.

**Sections of native woods.**—Probably the most perfect collection of our native woods is the magnificent series in the American Museum in Central Park, New York City, known as the "Jesup collection." The amount of money expended in gathering this collection was not less than \$150,000. Truncheons from this collection, which was carefully named by Dr. Charles S. Sargent, have been placed in the hands of Mr. Charles W. Spurr, of Boston, a well-known manufacturer of veneers, who has cut from them a few sets of thin sections which are now offered for sale.

These sets are certainly unique. Each represents about 200 species of native trees. Where the nature of the wood has permitted, transverse, tangential and radial sections have been cut of each. These sections vary in thickness according to the grain and character of the block from one one-hundredth to one two hundred and fiftieth of an inch. Each section is placed between thin sheets of mica, and mounted in flexible wood frames. Each frame consists of two layers of curled maple veneer backed by strong paper, and varnished with shellac. On the frame is printed the name of the individual or institution purchasing the set, a number corresponding to the specific name in Sargent's *Woods of the Jesup Collection*, the scientific name in full, the common name, the direction of the section and the name of the preparer.

One can hardly realize the time and patience represented by this work. The sections were cut with a 3-ton veneer-machine, which had to be adjusted for the cutting of each block and sometimes for the different parts of even the same piece. In all nearly 18,000 separate sections had to be handled and laid carefully between blotting paper. Add to this the preparation of the woods for cutting, the care necessary to prevent confusing the sections from the numbered truncheons, the making, finishing and printing of the frames, and the mounting of the sections, and we have a truly appalling amount of work. No such series has ever before been made and probably no one else will ever have opportunity or patience to prepare another. The sections prepared and mounted as they are, are exceedingly valuable for the study of the nature and character of the various native woods. These sets, by reason of their completeness, accurate naming, elegant and durable mounting, are unequaled, and a rare opportunity is thus offered to educational institutions which they ought not to be slow to avail themselves of. The price is certainly very reasonable.